



## **STAFF REPORT**

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### **Setting the Bi-Annual Council Priority Calendar (Step Two: Ranking the Issues)**

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

#### **Summary**

Last year a process for reviewing and prioritizing current and proposed Council “Priority Calendar items” was initiated. These are topics that require significant staff study and are generally placed on the Council agenda for action. The goal of this process is for Council to state their priority for study, clarify the scope and timeline of projects, and prevent issues from arising randomly and overwhelming staff resources without a clear sense of what is most important to the community.

A three-step process is again being utilized:

- At the August 26, 2003 meeting, Council reviewed all current and proposed projects, sought clarification, and provided direction to staff.
- At the meeting of September 9, Council will be asked to rank the new projects (including those “below the line” from the last ranking).
- On September 23, Council will review the rankings and final Project Description Forms (PDFs) for studies staff is able to take on, and approve a six-month Priority Calendar.

PDFs for current and new projects were Attachments B and C to the August 26 report. Copies are available from the City Clerk, if needed. Staff recommends Council review the list of new items, drop those that are not priorities, move any below the line, and then rank the remaining issues. After the rankings are tabulated, Council will have an opportunity to review the results and make any desired adjustments.

#### **Background**

As a result of an October, 2001 report, the Council Protocols were amended to establish a biannual review of study items and a process for handling Agenda Item #9’s because Item 9’s were often proposed in isolation of each other and the cumulative impact and interconnectedness wasn’t always clear.

Item 9’s are now handled as follows:

- ♦ Any Council Member can continue to introduce an Item 9 at any time.
- ♦ Item #9’s that meet the threshold for Priority Calendar issues (or other major projects requested by Council or the City Manager) would have a PDF developed and be added to a “proposed” list as they are suggested. *No Council action is necessary.*
- ♦ Council would review the proposed list as well as all pending items twice a year.
- ♦ Council would review and approve the “revised” master list to see that the proposed timelines and scopes are appropriate.
- ♦ For Item 9’s that are time sensitive, a vote by a majority of the Council can request that it

be taken up “out of order” (before the biannual review). A majority vote would lead to staff developing a PDF and a report to Council with any other relevant background information such as impact on workload.

- ♦ If, after being presented the PDF and background, the Council wanted to move forward with the item prior to the biannual priority-setting, it would require a super-majority to request staff proceed with the study.

At the August 26 meeting, Council reviewed the PDFs for current and new projects, asked questions of staff and solicited public comments.

## **Discussion**

### **Projects for Ranking**

Twenty-two new items were included in Attachment C (blue sheets) of the August 26 report for ranking by Council. Three new items (two related to parking and one related to energy) were added as a result of the meeting and the PDF's can be found in Attachment A of this report.

Please note in Step 1, staff inadvertently included two items (“Naming rights to CalTrain” and “Partnership with Oracle”) as “Below the Line” items in the City manager’s office. These two items were considered by Council in September 2002 and dropped. Therefore, they are not included for the ranking unless Council chooses to add them back to the list. *Thus, there are a total of 23 items to consider for ranking.*

The forms include a section for a staff recommendation. Generally, staff will make “No Recommendation” as the purpose of this process is for Council to set priorities and provide clear direction to staff. However, in some cases, staff will make a recommendation, in which case there is usually a brief explanation in the “Comments” section at the bottom of the page. As noted at the last meeting, staff is recommending two items be dropped, and three “*new*” items be placed “below the line” at this time:

#### **Staff is recommending dropping:**

- Road Plans (Public Works)
- Street Lights Policy (Public Works)

#### **Staff is recommending placing below the line:**

- Creek Restoration (Public Works)
- Barrett Community Center (Parks and Recreation)
- City Entry Improvements – San Mateo Border (Parks and Recreation)

Staff is also recommending placing two current items below the line:

- CA02 – Consideration of Ordinance Regarding Confidential Consumer Information From Financial Institutions
- PR01 – Performing Arts Center at Ralston School

### **Ranking Process**

#### **September 9 meeting**

- ✓ Public comments are invited.
- ✓ Council reviews the current projects (green sheets). A majority vote is suggested to drop, place below the line, or to modify any current items from the list.
- ✓ Council has a discussion on the new issues (blue sheets). Council may want to combine items if they seem related. For example, two current and two new items relate to parking. A majority vote is suggested to **drop, modify or combine** any new items from the list.
- ✓ Council will then **rank all the remaining new items, by department**. In other words, if a department has nine items on the final list, each one will be given a ranking from 1-9, with 1 being the top priority and 9 being the lowest priority. A discrete number should be given to each remaining item.
- ✓ The meeting will proceed with the next agenda item while staff tabulates the results and then reports back to Council.
- ✓ After reviewing the rankings, Council will have the opportunity to review and revise the list.

#### **Between September 9 and September 23:**

- Staff will review the list in priority order and determine how many new items can be taken on given existing workloads, and what timelines are realistic for achieving them. Council should keep in mind that the first responsibility of staff is to provide day-to-day services, then current projects, so there is limited capacity for new projects. Staff's ability to take on new projects will vary by department and will be based on a number of factors such as staffing levels, the nature of daily operations, the number and complexity of current projects, etc. For example, Community Development has significant projects underway, such as the General Plan and Economic Development.
- PDFs with timelines will be completed for those that staff proposes to begin in the next six months.
- Those items that were ranked but that can't be undertaken in the next six months will be placed "below the line" and will automatically come back at the next biannual review.

#### **September 23 meeting**

- Staff will bring back the list of what we feel can be accomplished, along with completed PDFs with milestones/timelines.
- Council will have another opportunity to review and revise the list.
- Staff will present a six month Priority Calendar of when these studies and other known items will be presented to Council.

#### Ranking Sheet

Attachment B to this report is a sample ranking sheet. It shows the issues - by department, estimated number of hours required to complete the project, the estimated cost of doing the study (beyond staff time), the Council ranking from March, and a column for Council Members to fill in their ranking.

#### Fiscal Impact

There is no direct fiscal impact to this report. Individual projects have cost estimates associated with them on the PDFs. *If a project ranked high enough by Council to be on the Calendar has*

*immediate fiscal implications that can not be funded within budgeted resources, that will be noted when staff brings back the Calendar at the next meeting.*

**Recommendation**

Staff recommends Council take the following actions:

1. Solicit any public input
2. Make a motion to drop the two new items noted in the report
3. Make a motion to put the three new items noted in the report “below the line”
4. Make a motion to put two current items “below the line” as noted in the report
5. Make a motion to drop, modify, combine or place “below the line” any other “new” items
6. Rank the remaining “new” items.

**Alternatives**

1. Modify the ranking process
2. Provide alternative direction to staff
3. Take no action at this time

**Attachments**

- A. New PDF's for ranking
- B. Ranking sheet

Respectfully submitted,

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